

can be contemplated under the War Measures Act and, "without restricting the generality of the foregoing," the other additional powers. What parliament is being asked under this bill as it stands is to give the governor in council a blank cheque of power authorizing the governor in council or those delegated by him to exercise all the powers under the War Measures Act and all the additional powers comprised in section 3, subsection 1. This bill pretends to place the War Measures Act in peace-time garb, whereas in point of fact it clothes the governor in council with greater powers than ever before.

Parliament ceased to exist, legislatively speaking, during the period of the war. The legislation in the main was passed by boards and controls and deputy ministers under the War Measures Act. There are six volumes of these acts and regulations. Boards were multiplied on every hand, new agencies were created, and every board and every agency became a little parliament of its own having the right to legislative authority.

The first principle as I apprehend it that we must follow in this house is to assure a fair distribution of goods; to take measures necessary to prevent inflation; to give private enterprise an opportunity to do a job for this country as it did during the period of the war, both in industry and in agriculture. The people of this country want jobs, and they expect parliament to create an atmosphere of confidence in government instead of the uncertainty that now prevails. No man knows what the next control is going to be, or the next interpretation of controls already effected. I believe that an end must be put to the uncertainty of having one board giving the green light to business and to industry, and another, almost at the same time, giving the red light. I believe in the maintenance of economic equilibrium, but economic equilibrium cannot be secured or maintained by the establishment of administrative anarchy under a bill such as the one now before us.

The minister mentioned Great Britain, and spoke of the powers parliament had delegated to the executive for a period of five years. Powers were granted, but parliament was left in control by a provision of the British act that any orders in council passed under that act should be laid on the table of the house for a period of forty days, during which any member of parliament may on motion ask parliament to revoke or repudiate or discharge the order in question. There is no such power here. Why was not that power included if it was not intended that absolute power without recourse to parliament was to be exercised

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

on the part of the governor in council? The only provision in that regard is contained in section 3, subsection 4:

Every order in council made under this act shall be laid before parliament as soon as may be after it is made.

No provision such as is made in Great Britain, where a socialist government, carrying out its great programme as it sees it, took steps to see to it that parliament should have the right to review at any time the acts of the king in council. Re-read the powers to be conferred under this bill. If the government exercise these powers it will be but a short step from regulation of business by government to government in business. I believe that the government has a place in the control of business to assure fairness and square dealing and to prevent cartels, and it has a place too in certain monopolies—electricity and the like. But, sir, no country can exist one-half private business and one-half government enterprise, each in competition with the other in the field of business and commerce. If another government came into power to-morrow all the powers which are conferred permit of just that.

Now I come to section 5, for the description of which it is difficult to find suitable words. How many hon. members in this house realize the import of that section?

The orders and regulations made under the War Measures Act or pursuant to authority created under the said act in force immediately before the day this section comes into force shall, except for the purposes of subsection 4 of section 3 of this act—

That is, those already revoked.

—be deemed to be reenacted on that day under this act or pursuant to authority created under this act.

Mr. ST. LAURENT: The reference is not to those already revoked; that is already provided for. The reference there is to the requirement to table. They have already been published.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: The correction is properly made. I thank the minister for it. That section means that all the orders in council that have been passed since 1939 will, on the day that this bill becomes law, be deemed to have been enacted by parliament and to be thereafter in effect. The minister said that the government was proceeding rapidly in the matter of decontrols. Well, here is the record. The promise in May and June, during the election campaign, was that unnecessary controls were to be removed, and the Minister of Reconstruction made the statement in one of his speeches as reported in the press that eighty per cent would be removed immediately after the end of hostilities in Japan.